Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Cancelled)

2. (Currently Amended) A network as claimed in claim ~~1~~ 18, wherein the optical network is arranged in a manner such that, in use, the management ~~function~~ is being effected on a computer located within a network element of the optical network.

3. (Currently Amended) A network as claimed in claims ~~1~~ 18 or 2, wherein the management ~~function~~ comprises the distribution of one or more of ~~the~~ a group consisting of alarm reports, audit logs, alarm logs, and status reports.

4. (Currently Amended) A network as claimed in claim ~~1~~ 18, wherein the optical network is arranged in a manner such that, in use, the management ~~function~~ is being effected via e-mail messages transmitted using the ~~standard~~ TCP/IP protocols.

5. (Currently Amended) A network as claimed in claim ~~1~~ 18, wherein the optical network ~~may be~~ is arranged in a manner such that, in use, the management ~~function~~ is being effected via an HTTP server incorporated in ~~the~~ a network element and accessible via a conventional web browser.

6. (Currently Amended) A network as claimed in claim ~~1~~ 2, wherein the network element comprises a network node or an in-line amplifier.

7. (Cancelled)

8. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim ~~7~~ 19, wherein the management ~~function~~ is being effected on a computer located within a network element of the optical network.

9. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claims ~~7 or~~ 19 or 8, wherein the management ~~function~~ comprises the distribution of one or more of ~~the~~ a group consisting of alarm reports, audit logs, alarm logs, and status reports.

10. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim ~~7~~ 19, wherein the management ~~function~~ is being effected via e-mail messages transmitted using ~~standard~~ TCP/IP protocols.

11. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim ~~7~~ 19, wherein the management ~~function~~ is being effected via an HTTP server incorporated in ~~the~~ a network element and accessible via a conventional web browser.

12. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim ~~7~~ 8, wherein the network element ~~may~~ comprises a network node or an in-line amplifier.

13. (Cancelled)

14. (Currently Amended) A network element as claimed in claim ~~13~~ 20, wherein the means for communicating comprises an SMTP server application.

15. (Currently Amended) A network element as claimed in claims ~~13~~ 20 or 14, wherein the means for communicating ~~may~~ comprises an HTTP server application.

16. (Currently Amended) A network element as claimed in claim ~~13~~ 20, wherein the management ~~function~~ comprises the distribution of one or more of ~~the~~ a group consisting of alarm reports, audit logs, alarm logs, and status reports.

17. (Currently Amended) A network element as claimed in claim ~~13~~ 20, wherein the network element is in the form of a network node or an in-line amplifier.

18. (New) An optical Wavelength Division Multiplexing (WDM) network arranged in a manner such that at least management of an optical-electrical-optical switch structure in the optical network is effected utilising TCP/IP communication protocols.

19. (New) A method of managing an optical WDM network, the method comprising the step of effecting at least management of an optical-electrical-optical switch structure of the optical network utilising TCP/IP communication protocols.

20. (New) A WDM network element for use in an optical WDM network, the WDM network element comprising

an optical-electrical-optical switch structure; and a communication unit for communicating using TCP/IP protocols to effect at least management of the optical-electrical-optical switch structure.